

Valued in public

Helping people with a learning disability to work in public bodies

Anne O'Bryan, Stephen Beyer November 2005

With a foreword by Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, Department for Work and Pensions



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What is 'Valued in public' about?

Anne O'Bryan and Steve Beyer wrote **Valued in public** to help public employers like councils and health services give more people with a learning disability jobs.

It says how public employers can make sure you have a fair chance of finding out about jobs, applying for them and working well in your job. Anne and Steve found many employers employing wonderful people in wonderful jobs. So they wrote this guide so that other employers could see that it is a good thing to do.

They wanted to learn how good employers get good employees. So they looked at how they:

- advertise jobs
- recruit people
- offer induction and training
- supervise people
- offer promotion.

Anne and Steve also looked at what the employers they met did to attract good workers with a learning disability and what they did to help them do a good job.

There are different types of support for employers:



- **supported employment** – where you have a real job, are paid by a real employer and get help from a support organisation to make it work.

Helping people with learning disabilities to work in public bodies



- **funding** for things like ramps, equipment and support
- **disability awareness training** from self advocacy groups to tell employers how to support you better.

Why people with a learning disability should have jobs:

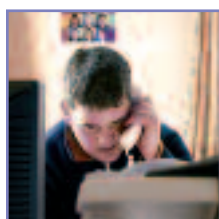
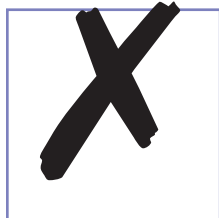


- Many employers think their workers with a learning disability are good and really want to work.
- It promotes good attitudes to them and helps them take part in everyday life.
- It teaches other staff more about what disability means.
- Employers want good employees with a disability.
- Disabled people want jobs.
- The Government wants excluded people to take part.
- The law says it's the right thing to do.
- Supported employment and other support can help.



Finding out about what jobs are available

Why people with a learning disability don't apply for jobs:



- Most people with a learning disability don't have jobs and often don't expect a real job. Often they think work isn't for them.
- They may also have been on benefits for a long time. They may worry that getting a paid job will mean losing benefits.
- Many want to work, but don't know enough about the jobs employers have and which ones they might be able to do.
- Many people do not read well and find information about jobs hard to understand.

How employers can make things better

People with a learning disability need clear information about what jobs they need to actually do.

Employers can help you if they:



- tell everyone about where people with a learning disability have got jobs
- stand for fairness and make this clear in their adverts and when they contact you
- make sure they are positive and friendly when you get in touch with them about jobs
- give positive feedback where people fail in a job application to help you get better at applying for jobs.

Why some employers find it hard to find jobs that people with a learning disability can do:

- They have not met people with a learning disability.
- They don't see it as their job to do this.
- They don't know how well people can do jobs.
- They don't know how to help people find the jobs they can do.

How employers can help you:



- They can offer temporary jobs and try-outs to help you find out about the organisation and see what you can do. They can offer you a permanent job if things go well.
- They should make sure you progress in your job. They should think about giving you more pay, promotion and career moves – like any other worker.

Employers can look for:



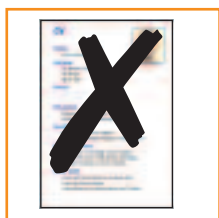
- jobs that don't need qualifications or driving license
- jobs that don't change all the time
- jobs in teams where tasks can be shared
- getting advice from supported employment organisations to find jobs which suit people with a learning disability.



The next part of the booklet looks at the different stages of applying for a job and working in a job. It looks at how employers can help you at every stage.

Job adverts

Why don't people apply for jobs?



- Often people have failed to get jobs in the past.
- They don't know what jobs are available.
- They may see the public sector as not wanting outside people like people with a disability.

How employers can help you

They can:



- tell people in their organisation about the good reasons to employ a disabled person and how they can make **reasonable adjustments**
- be flexible in recruiting people
- advertise in newspapers and:
 - on their website
 - at the Jobcentre
 - in free newspapers
 - by telling people
- make their website easy to read
- get to know local learning disability groups – advertise with them and use disability magazines
- tell people that they can use different ways to respond (like email).



Choosing people for jobs

Why don't people apply?

- Public bodies often use recruitment agencies to get workers. This can exclude people.
- Some people with a learning disability are nervous of big organisations, and need to know how they can be included.

How employers can help you

They can:

- put recruiters, operational managers and disabled people who want jobs in touch with each other
- reach people through jobfairs, offer advice like how to fill out forms, get to an interview and where you can get more help
- make a long-term plan and check how it is working
- ask people applying to tell them of their disability and work with you on any adjustments you need.

Applying and recruiting

What can get in the way:

- How some employers recruit workers may not suit you.
- Interviews don't always tell employers whether you will be good in a job. You may need more time, and be shy in groups. You might be bad at interviews but good at the job!
- Job descriptions and person specifications may ask you for qualifications not needed for the job.
- Some people still think that people with a learning disability can't work.

How employers can help you

They can:

- look for people who can do that job and only ask for qualifications needed for the job
- make their information easy to understand by:
 - having large print application forms or information on tape
 - using simple language and pictures
 - accepting CV and emails – not just application forms
- help you with the application by:
 - telling you how applying works and offering you help with applying for a job
 - talking to you to see what style of information helps you – like large print or tape
 - asking about the adjustments you need, not about your disability.



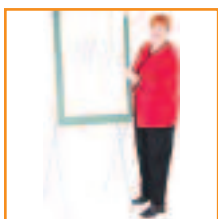
Interviews



- The law says interviews should be accessible. Employers may ask if you need more time to do a test, or a supporter at an interview.
- The best employers make sure you understand their questions and allow longer interviews so you can tell them what you want them to know.
- They make sure your interview is relaxed with simple questions with not too many people on your interview panel.
- They speak slowly and clearly.
- Their questions are about whether you can do a job, not about your disability.
- They offer you a work test – if a written test is too difficult.
- They may offer you a job try-out to choose a job that suits you.
- The best employers remember – with support you can learn to do a job!

Recruiting you

When recruiting, the law says an employer must make *reasonable adjustment* to do things like:



- the **conditions** they give you on appointment
- the **induction** they give you
- the **training and support** they give you on the job
- **how they solve any problems.**



Flexible working and support

What can go wrong?

- People with a learning disability are often excluded from jobs they can do. This is because employers ask for things that aren't to do with the tasks of your job (like having GCSE exams).
- The time from when you apply for your job to when you start it can be too short to set up the support you need.
- Some employers aren't sure how well they can appoint people with a learning disability and don't always know about what people can do with support.
- Some employers try to treat people equally, rather than meeting a disabled person's needs.



How employers can help:

- All departments can be involved in employing people.
- They can be in touch with other employers to find out what works.
- They may need to give you:
 - more supervision and feedback
 - a mentor
 - more time to get used to the job.

- They can get help to match you to a vacancy and support for their staff to help you. They can get you a **job coach**, help with mentoring, extra training costs or equipment. They can get help from supported employment agencies.

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- Being flexible in the way a job is done can help recruit people with a learning disability. Employers can:
 - change the order or way a job is done if it makes it easier for you to do
 - break the job down into parts to make it easier for you to learn
 - change tasks so another worker might do a small task that you cannot do (like filling in forms or writing a report)
 - change working hours to suit you.



- The law says employers shouldn't pass on information about your disability unless:
 - it is absolutely necessary
 - it helps you to do your job
 - you agree to it.
- Make health and safety advice easier for you by using clear language and pictures.

Making inductions better



- Employers can offer all staff disability training.
- They can make sure inductions happen straight away, take place where you work and be tailored to your job.
- They may need to:
 - give you more time than others
 - give you easier information, like easy-to-read material and pictures
 - show you things and let you try them, rather than just hearing about them
 - give you someone to support you through the induction.

Learning the job

After your induction, you will need time to learn the job. This should suit your needs.



What problems you may face:

- Flexible working is not always valued by organisations.
- People often have wrong ideas about a person's abilities to learn to do a good job.
- People with a learning disability sometimes find it difficult to fit in socially.

How employers can help you to learn:



- Employers can talk to you about what **reasonable adjustments** should be made and how they should be made.
- The Government can offer help for support workers, fares to work and support with your communication.
- Again, supported employment agencies can help.

Helping people with learning disabilities to work in public bodies



Trainers should:

- use easy to understand language and try using picture guides
- explain things, speak slowly, help you to try for yourself with advice and use pictures
- help you to put right your own mistakes
- give clear feedback and ask you to tell them you did right and wrong
- break steps down to help you learn the job in smaller bits
- give you time to practise and learn one thing at a time
- allow you to repeat a task so you can learn it better
- ask you how you learn best
- be aware of any medication you are using how it may affect your work
- let your supporter do less over time as you become confident working on your own.

There are some other ways employers can help you fit in socially.

They can:

- make sure staff know about any reasonable adjustments around you
- make sure staff know the disability policies
- help staff see that you may be shy and may need to be encouraged to be part of the team.

Supervision



Supervision is important to help you keep up the quality of your work and keep your job. The law says employers need to review things regularly to see if they are still working.

We found out:

- Successful managers have the ability to communicate well with a range of workers and know about disability.



How employers can make your supervision better:

- Think of all the ways you play a positive part in terms of:
 - the job
 - promoting diversity
 - working in a team
 - enthusiasm for work.
- Give you feedback on your work themselves. Do this respectfully – not in front of others.
- Give you feedback as soon as possible and make it clear what you should do in the future.
- Try a mentoring system, where you have a colleague to advise and support you.

Sorting out problems



The law says employers must look into reasonable adjustments as soon as they see any problem with your work.

- Some employers may not realise that disability is causing a problem.
- Your relationships with other staff can be the key to problems.
- People with a learning disability are sometimes bullied in the workplace.

How employers can help sort out problems

They can do this by:

- being friendly
- making things accessible for you
- making sure you get support to understand the seriousness of the situation if your behaviour might lead to a disciplinary
- taking bullying seriously
- checking that you have understand the main requirements of your job
- checking they have looked at all possible adjustments involving you
- getting advice to see if anything more can be done
- finding out whether things outside work are upsetting you and making it hard for you to concentrate on your job.

Disputes



In disputes, the law says that an employer must not treat a person with a disability less fairly than anybody else without good reason.

You may have difficulties when going through a disciplinary procedure if it is confusing and complicated.

Employers can help by:

- making sure you understand what is expected of you, what will happen and why it is happening
- making sure all information is easy for you to understand.

When a problem has to go to a disciplinary employers can help further by:

- setting up meetings to make it easy for you to take part allowing more time, explaining things in different ways and having smaller groups
- allowing you to have someone to support you to understand and have your say.

If the problem involves other people employers will have to find out whether the cause is misunderstanding on your part, or due to bullying by staff. Bullying cannot be allowed – most employers will have a policy on this.

If you cannot do a job any longer, employers can help by thinking about finding you a different job.

Developing your career

You will want to develop in your career, just like other people. The best employers will make sure you are treated fairly in this.

- Sometimes part-time jobs which do not have much responsibility are seen as the only jobs people with a learning disability can do. The best employers expect their staff with a learning disability to move ahead and support them to develop.
- They will make sure you have training and other opportunities to help you get ahead in your work.
- They will look at all the ways you help the organisation.

Employers learning from employing disabled people

The law says public sector employers must look at their rules and to learn from their attempts to employ more people with a disability.

- Public sector employers often do not know how successful they are at including disabled people in their workforce and do not analyse when it's not working.
- Some employers do not know how to bring about change.

Really good employers:

- figure out what's working and learn from it
- use exit interviews to figure out how make things better
- publicise changes and improvements
- keep getting better!

To find out more

For details of organisations included in the public bodies list, visit the **Disability Rights Commission** website at www.drc.gov.uk and look for the Code of Practice.

For more information on **TRIPOD** and more guidance on reasonable adjustments for disabled people, visit the Employers' Forum on Disability at www.employers-forum.co.uk

For applicant and employee referral and support, contact: **Jobcentre Plus, WORKSTEP** and **Access to Work** at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/cms.asp?page=/home/customers/helpfordisabledpeople

For more information on supported employment and agency links, contact BASE/AfSE at www.afse.org.uk

Scottish Union of Supported Employment at www.suse.org.uk

Association of Supported Employment Agencies (Wales) at www.learningdisabilitywales.org.uk

Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment at www.niuse.org.uk

For information on the English **learning disability strategy**, and links to accessible materials, visit **Valuing People** at www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

For more information on disability awareness training from groups of people with a learning disability, contact **People First** at www.peoplefirst.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc.gov.uk

Mencap
www.mencap.org.uk

Valuing People Support Team
www.valuingpeople.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus
Where you claim Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support. Personal advisers can help you look for a job. You can find your local office on the website.
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Helping people with learning disabilities to work in public bodies

North East

The Percy Hedley Foundation
Services

North West

Breakthrough UK
Pure Innovations

South West

Employer Led Development
Project
Work Able Plus

Scotland

Supported Employment
(North Lanarkshire Council)

London

Access Employment (Camden
Council)

UK Wide

Jobcentre Plus
Mencap Pathway and
WorkRight
Remploy Sabre employment
Shaw Trust

Thanks

We would like to thank **TRIPOD** – an initiative between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Employers' Forum on Disability for influencing the structure of this guide and providing many of the best practice employer contacts.

Thanks also to:

- **The Employers' Forum on Disability** for making sure the guide is easy to read and useful
- **Susan Boddy and the Valuing People Support Team** for recognising the need the guide and commissioning the work
- **The intermediaries and support organisations** that helped us for finding examples of best practice and who we discovered offered help to employers and employees when we conducted our interviews. You will find similar organisations in your area.

Thanks to the best practice employers who we found so committed to reasonable adjustment:

- London Borough of Camden Library
- DWP Accessibility Solutions Team
- The Home Office
- Jobcentre Plus HR Policy and Diversity Team
- Manchester BBC Recruitment Team
- Manchester Council Corporate Services
- Metropolitan Police Fingerprint Archive
- North Lanarkshire Social Work Department
- Plymouth Royal Mail
- South London and Maudsley NHS Trust Pharmacy and Multidisciplinary Library
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Human Resources
- London Borough of Sutton County Council Customer Services
- Wiltshire County Council Personnel and Adult and Community Services.



Accessible text: Working with Words
www.workingwithwords.org

What the difficult words in this report mean



Disability

Some disabled people have difficulty doing some everyday things without support. A disability can be physical or intellectual. The word disability includes people with a learning disability.

Public employer

These can be government departments, local councils, colleges, NHS trusts, the police, libraries, museums or other bodies.

Reasonable adjustment

These are the changes an employer can make to help a disabled person do a job as well as they can.

Discrimination

Treating you in an unfair way because you are disabled.

Job advert

Information which tells people that there is a job available. It tells you what skills are needed and how much the pay is. Adverts can be in newspapers, JobCentres and on the internet.



Application form

This is the form which an employer sends you. You write or type information about yourself on it like your experience and how well you can do the employer's job.

Short listing

When they have received application forms, the employer makes a list of suitable people who they want to interview for the job.

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Interview

A meeting between you and an employer. This is one way to find out how well a job suits you.

Work experience or try-out

This is a short chance to have a go at a job to see if you can do it and if you like it. It's another way to find out how well a job suits you.

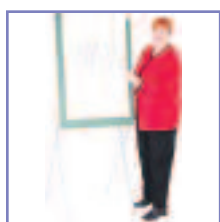


Contract

This is an agreement between you and your employer telling you the conditions of work. This means how many hours you work, how much holiday you get and other things. You and your employer sign the contract.

Induction

This is an introduction to your work and happens when you start your job. You will be shown your workplace, introduced to people you work with, shown the health and safety policy and told about the organisation.



Training

This is the teaching you are given to help you to be better at your job.

Mentor

Someone at work who offers you advice and support.



Supervision

This is a private meeting between your manager and you. It gives you a chance to talk about any problems in your job. Your employer can talk about whether your job is being done properly.

Personal Development Plan

This is a private agreement between your manager and you. It lists what you would like to do next in your job, such as things you would like to learn and how you might get paid more for doing more things.

Disciplinary

This is an official procedure which happens when something is not going well at work. The employer looks into what has happened. It might be lateness, damage to property, bullying or another problem. You also have the chance to have your say.

Exit interviews

These are meetings you have with your supervisor if you have decided to leave your job. They are to find out why this was not the right job for you, so you can both improve what you do.



The law

The law says that disabled people have the right to be treated fairly by all employers. It says employers must change how they do things so that disabled people can get jobs without discrimination. They should make reasonable adjustments to how they work to include disabled people.

Public employers too must do this. Big public authorities need to make plans saying what they are doing to employ more disabled people. It means that public bodies will be important in helping more disabled people get and keep jobs with them.

Helping people with learning disabilities to work in public bodies



The *Disability Rights Commission* promotes equality for disabled people. It gives information on its website and has a helpline for disabled people and employers.

The *Valuing People* White Paper aims to include people with a learning disability in all areas of life. It says public bodies should lead the way in employing people with a learning disability.



Care Services Improvement Partnership **CSIP**

Valuing People
Support Team